(c) whether there are nearly two million potential AIDS carriers in the country; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) The Government has seen the news item. (b) to (d) Surveillance for detecting HIV infection among groups practising at risk behaviour was initiated in October, 85. As of 1st February, 1992, 6683 persons practising at risk behaviour were found to be positive, out of a total number of 12,73,829 persons screened. This indicates a sero positivity rate of 5.25 per 1000 amongst groups practising at risk behaviour. There are no reliable estimates regarding the prevalence of HIV infection in general population.

The National AIDS Control Programme was started from 1987 with emphasis on Blood safety and organising surveillance throughout the country.

With a view to preventing spread of HIV infection in the country, a comprehensive project was formulated and posed to the World Bank for financial assistance. The project would involve an outlay of Rs. 229.5 crores, and would be implemented for five years beginning from 1st April, 1992. Negotiations have been concluded with the World Bank and an assistance of Rs. 270 crores is expected to be available from international Development Association (a Soft Loan Affiliate of World Bank for financing the project. Under the project, the following areas will be strengthened:—

— Programme Management
— Surveillance
— Blood Safety
— Information, Education and Communication
— Control of sexually transmitted diseases
— Condom promotion
— Cess management.

Manufacture of Chocolates

989. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be please to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that some leading brands of Chocolates manufactured in the country contain a carcinomated to have come down to the level of than maximum permissible limit;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) to (c) Environmental Research Laboratory, Lucknow, which is a small private laboratory, has screened a few samples of chocolates and reported that they show higher nickel content in chocolates. However, the result of samples of chocolate analysed at the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, a permanent research centre under the Indian Council of Medical Research have been found to be in agreement with values reported from Denmark i.e. with a mean figure of 1.26 mg/kg. Latest report of WHO has mentioned that there is lack of evidence of a carcinogenic risk from oral exposure of nickel. In fact, nickel has been shown as an essential trace metal in some plants and bactarial enzymes. Based on this information, the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, has opined that there is no need to lay down any maximum limit of nickel in chocolate.

Infant mortality rates

990. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the mortality rate among the children in the country has gone down in the last few years;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;